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Renee Gaffney	Donna Puckett	Jerry Williams
Susan Gorhan	Tess Ramos (total hip replacement)	Sharon Woods
Melanie A. Hoffman (parasinusitis, fibromyal-		Billie Wooten
		Gerard Yursis

Idol

From front page

in the competition's top five.

Willens performed last that evening, something that he had hoped would allow him to leave a good impression on the audience.

During an interview before the rehearsal for his performance that night, he stood outside the theatre unable to hear the performances before him. Even with his understandable performance and understandable nervousness, Willens was candid about the idol experience and his luck so far.

"This is a 'hurry up and wait' ordeal," he said. "I've just been craving information on what the other folks have been singing and how they have fared."

A lot of the singers sang rhythm and blues and gospel tunes, and were good at it, he added. But, hopefully as a classic rock singer, Willens could differentiate himself from the pack.

Glad to have had made it into the top 16, Willens said, his particular group of eight was the tougher of the two, in his eyes.

Wearing a favorite button down shirt he wore in the local finals for the performance that evening, he nervously waited his turn to sound check, and sing on stage with a backing track, for the first time in the final competition.

And, fearing the worst, he noted that even if he were to be cut that evening, there was

always the chance of being selected as the wild card singer, and making it into the top five.

But, even if he did not make it, Willens said, he hoped he'd be able to maintain a positive attitude and continue participating in the competition as a group singer for the finale show.

"This is just good for morale," he said.

Also good for Willens himself could be the chance to be selected for a future Soldier Show, and the opportunity to serve his country and fellow Soldiers.

As the Soldier before him finished, Willens' nervousness was apparent.

"It's like when you're standing in line for a roller coaster--you see it go up and hear people screaming--then you go down that first hill. There's nothing you can do but scream and try to stay in tune while screaming. You get that edge right before you go on and you either consume it or it consumes you," he said.

That evening, Willens performed "Don't Stop Believing" by Journey, a song that Steve Perry's incredible vocal range made nearly impossible for other singers. To perform it, Willens had the key lowered a step in order to hit all the high notes with more ease.

The crowd reacted with incredible enthusiasm, but the judges, unfortunately did not have the same reaction.

Country music artist Michael Peterson questioned whether Willens had a vocal coach, as he was right at the top of his range on this partic-

ular song.

"I think you've got a wonderful voice," Tilley said.

Byrd echoed Tilley, commenting on how much she enjoyed the sound of Willens' voice.

No amount of crowd reaction or judges' enthusiasm or criticism could place Willens in the top five. Not only were the other contestants in his group of eight fantastic performers, but the overall winner of the competition came from this group.

After being cut, Willens continued on in Georgia, practicing and learning songs for the final performances done as a group. And, he got to enjoy a private hotel room, as did all of the officers participating in the contest.

And, no matter how it ended, Willens knew all along that the exposure and experience he would get while competing would be good for him as a singer and a professional.

Willens was hoping he would be able to maintain that perspective, as he had another important performance defending his Ph.D. dissertation at North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine in Raleigh on Oct. 26. His work on the absorption of pesticides across the skin of amphibians was defended successfully.

"The blessing in disguise is that I got to return to Matthew (his 12-week old son) and the rest of the family after two weeks."

Plus, as Willens put it, "It was better than a day at the office."

Army game

From page 3

going to come in the Army, and we want them to feel like they've been here before. Like they're hitting the ground running. They've captured everything down to the dirt."

"Fort Benning has an interesting history with the game because the PC version takes a player through basic training. He can even go to Airborne School and Ranger school," said Maj. Randy Zeegers, of the 20th Special Forces Group,

Alabama National Guard.

"As he goes through different schools, he is able to play different levels," he said.

A new Internet download for "America's Army" called "Overmatch" will also come out in the fall.

"It's designed to show the overmatch capabilities the Army has, like Javelin missiles and all the stuff the enemy can't bring to bear," Wardynski said.

"America's Army" can be downloaded free of charge at www.americasarmy.com.